INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Office of the Prosecutor

Article 15 Communication under the Rome Statute
Situation Concerning the Republic of Benin

Submitted by: Matthew Ojoduma
Date: 29 January 2026

---

1. Introduction and Legal Basis

This communication is submitted pursuant to Article 15 of the Rome Statute for the purpose of providing information on conduct that may fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

The information provided raises concerns that serious violations of international law may not be isolated incidents, but may instead reflect systemic practices connected to detention, judicial handling of terrorism suspects, and deprivation of fundamental rights within the Republic of Benin.

This submission does not allege criminal responsibility against specific individuals but seeks independent assessment by the Office of the Prosecutor as to whether there is a reasonable basis to proceed with a preliminary examination.

---

2. Personal Detention and Treatment

I was arbitrarily detained in the Republic of Benin from **29 January 2025** until **25 November 2025** initially at **Parakou and Cotonou detention cells** and subsequently transferred to the **Maison d'Arrêt d'Abomey-Calavi**.

My detention occurred under circumstances that lacked effective judicial safeguards, timely access to remedies, and meaningful review of the legality of detention.

During my detention, I experienced serious medical neglect, including being required to obtain essential medication externally while in State custody, despite suffering acute and ongoing

physical pain and distress from multiple and reoccurring infections. Requests for timely provision of prescribed medication or appropriate medical attention were not adequately addressed by custodial authorities, despite my full dependence on State institutions for care.

This occurred over an extended period, resulting in worsening symptoms and unnecessary suffering. Such treatment raises questions regarding potential inhuman or degrading treatment within a detention environment where control, oversight, and decision-making authority rested with State institutions.

---

3. Observations Concerning Terrorism-Suspect Detention Practices

While detained, I personally observed the repeated transfer of large numbers of detainees identified as terrorism suspects, originating from Burkina Faso and Niger.

These detainees were transported from northern Benin to southern regions near major population centers, including Cotonou, and were held at the Maison d'Arrêt d'Abomey-Calavi.

Key observations include:

- Regular weekly transfers of detainees for court appearances, often involving groups of 10–30 individuals per transfer, multiple times per month.
- Use of air-conditioned buses reportedly provided with financing from France
- Continued access by detainees to mobile telephones while in custody, including the use of a limited set of designated telephone numbers shared among large groups of detainees (more than two hundred individuals classified as terrorism suspects in some instances)
- Routine return of detainees to detention following court appearances without apparent substantive judicial review or meaningful consideration of release or alternative measures

These observations suggest that court proceedings may in some instances have functioned as procedural formalities rather than effective judicial safeguards.

The scale, regularity, and organized nature of these transfers indicate that these were not isolated events but part of an established detention and judicial-processing system.

During my detention, I also observed the use of electronic systems for the capture and management of detainee identities, case references, and custodial status within the Maison d'Arrêt d'Abomey-Calavi and related facilities.

Approximately four days after my arrival, on or about **12 February 2025**, I was informed by custodial staff and observed that the electronic detainee-capture system in use at the facility had been shut down. Following this shutdown, over **3,000 prisoners and detainees inclu**ding myself were re-captured and re-registered manually.

This event is significant because I had been electronically registered shortly before the shutdown, and prior investigative inquiries had already confirmed my identity as a YouTuber engaged in public communications concerning terrorism and regional security. The timing of the shutdown, its scale, and the absence of transparent explanation raise concerns regarding record continuity, traceability, and the potential vulnerability of detainee data to alteration or erasure.

Given the publicly documented involvement of **Prisonniers Sans Frontières (PRSF)**, a French NGO, in detention record-management support and administrative processes in Benin, the shutdown and subsequent re-registration process raise matters relevant to investigation, including:

- Whether detainee records were preserved, altered, or lost
- Which entities authorized or administered the shutdown
- Whether audit logs or backups exist
- Whether the event disproportionately affected politically or security-sensitive detainees
- Whether external partners were notified or involved

These circumstances, when considered together with documented arbitrary detention, denial of medical care, and the observed escort and transfer of terrorism suspects, raise serious questions regarding accountability, judicial independence, and the adequacy of safeguards within detention and judicial cooperation frameworks.

---

4. Potential Systemic Character of the Conduct

The practices described above appear to form part of a broader pattern characterized by:

- Prolonged detention without meaningful judicial remedy
- Limited transparency in terrorism-related detention
- Restricted effectiveness of domestic legal safeguards
- Movement of large numbers of high-risk detainees into major civilian population centers

Where detention practices affecting large groups occur in a structured, repetitive, and organized manner, questions arise as to whether such conduct may meet the threshold of systemic or policy-linked practices rather than individual misconduct.

---

5. International Cooperation Context

It is a matter of public record that the Republic of Benin maintains judicial and security cooperation arrangements with external partners, including the French Republic, particularly in the context of counter-terrorism efforts in northern Benin and the Sahel region.

While international cooperation is not inherently unlawful, the interaction between:

- Observed detention practices
- External logistical or institutional support
- Alleged deficiencies in judicial oversight

raises legitimate questions regarding whether adequate safeguards, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms were in place to prevent or address serious rights violations and security risks.

---

6. Observations Concerning PRSF Involvement

Based on personal observation and publicly available information, **Prisonniers Sans Frontières (PRSF)** has reportedly been involved in detention-record management, administrative processes, and moral/material support programs for detainees in Benin, and participates in detainee-related programs and reporting structures involving French authorities.

The scope of PRSF's role, the oversight exercised by Beninese authorities, and the knowledge of external partners concerning detention conditions may be relevant to understanding the institutional environment in which detention practices occurred.

---

7. Additional First-Hand Evidence

During my detention at Maison d'Arrêt d'Abomey-Calavi, I observed that a limited set of designated telephone numbers was used by detainees across different detention categories, including more than two hundred individuals classified as terrorism suspects.

These shared communication channels may be capable of:

- Technical tracing
- Call-detail analysis
- Network reconstruction

Such material may assist investigators in mapping detainee movements, communication structures, and possible coordination patterns within detention facilities.

---

8. Gravity and Need for Independent Scrutiny

The issues described involve:

- Deprivation of liberty
- Alleged medical neglect in detention amounting to potential inhuman treatment
- Large-scale handling and movement of terrorism suspects
- Potential deficiencies in judicial oversight
- Cross-border and international cooperation elements

Taken together, these factors indicate serious matters of international concern that may extend beyond individual circumstances and may warrant independent assessment as to whether crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court have occurred.

---

9. Purpose of This Communication

This submission is made in good faith to assist the Office of the Prosecutor in determining whether there is a reasonable basis to initiate a preliminary examination into:

- Detention practices and medical neglect in Benin
- The handling and judicial processing of terrorism suspects
- The institutional and cooperation frameworks under which such practices operated

---

10. Supporting Documentation

Available for submission in annexes:

- Medical records and prescriptions
- Correspondence with United Kingdom authorities
- Detention and procedural documents
- Lists of designated prison telephone numbers
- Notes regarding detainee transfers and transport patterns
- Other corroborating materials

---

11. Signature

Submitted by:
Matthew Ojoduma

Date: 29 January 202